

**Amendment to the Specification**

At page 6, first full paragraph lines 6-14, please replace the paragraph with the following rewritten paragraph:

Once the bone screws 11 are extended through the screw holes of the bone plate 14 with the threads ~~22~~ 21 threadably engaging the interior of the smooth bone bore, the locking screws are rotated by a tool (not shown) fitted into the receptacle 28. As shown, the bone screw 11 has a smooth unthreaded shank near the head 13. The leading end of the screw has a tapered portion 23 to engage the leading end of a pilot hole in the bone. The bone screw heads 13 are surrounded by the depressions 15 and compressively disposed against the bottoms of the depressions. Therefore, the screw 11 is locked in place by a smooth new bone-anchor interface and the screw threads engage the walls of the bore. Of course, other combinations of locking screws and anchor configurations may be used, such as, a constant taper of each.

At page 6, second full paragraph lines 15-18, please replace the paragraph with the following rewritten paragraph:

The anterior surface of the vertebrae **V** and the plate 10 form a low profile interface, as shown in Fig. 3 1A. This is especially important in reducing the possibility of internal trauma to

adjacent soft tissue, e.g., in the anterior cervical spinal fixation. The plate is curved to further conform the plate to the anatomy and reduce the silhouette. Fig. 1B illustrates the plate set forth in Fig. 1A which is rotated 90 degrees and shown without a pictorial of the vertebrae.